

Administrator Perspectives on Co-Teaching: Helping to Facilitate the Creation of Successful Programs

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The Problem

As federal, state, and local government continue to increase requirements and expectations for students with disabilities to be present in the general education classroom, districts and schools will need to continue developing innovative ways to include these students effectively in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Districts are currently turning toward the practice of co-teaching to help to increase their number of students with IEP's to be included in the LRE for the majority of the school day.

Co-teaching has many documented benefits, but there is little written about how these programs should be implemented and supported within a district to foster successful programs.

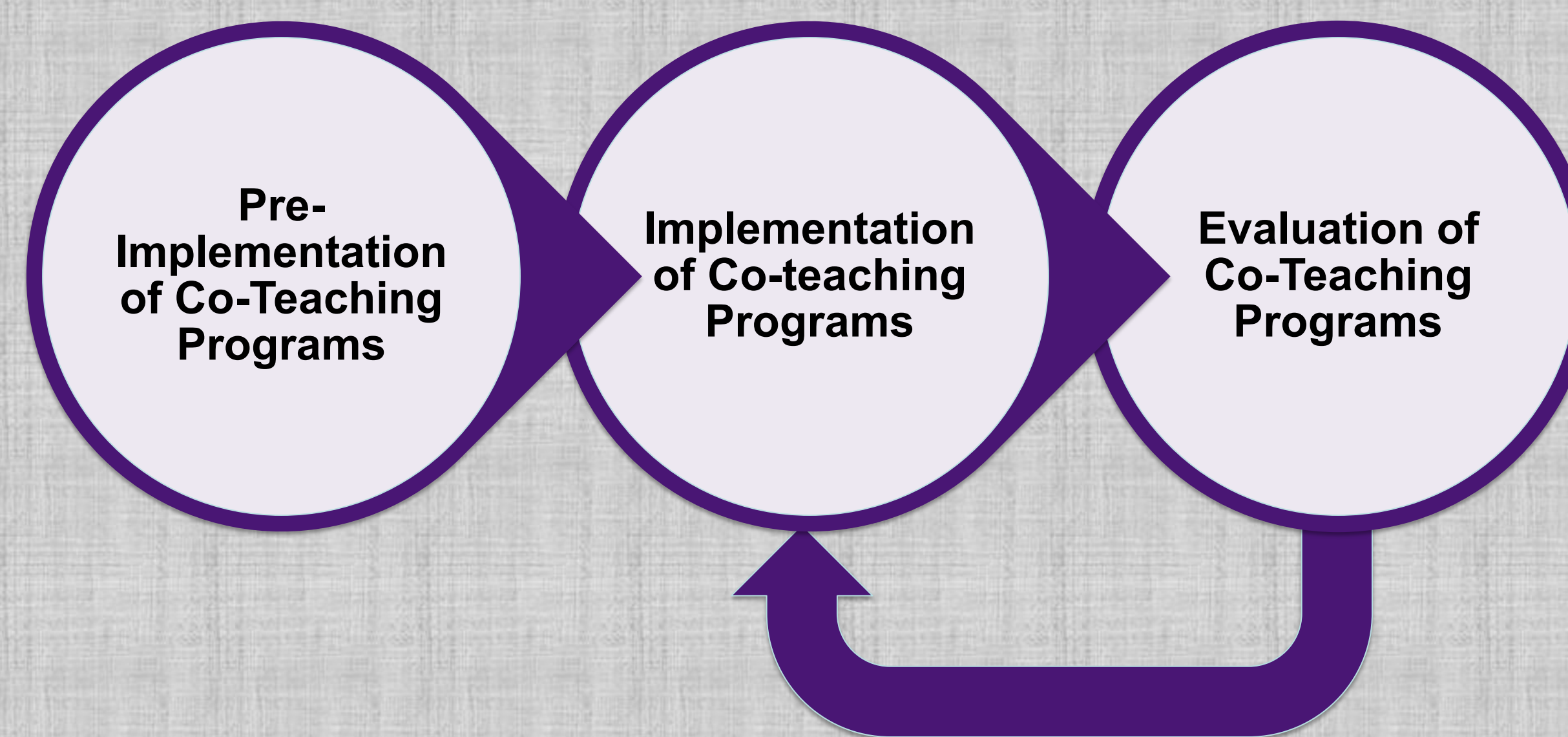
Results

- **Pre-Implementation of Co-Teaching Programs**
 - Professional development and collective efficacy are vital prior to program implementation for all stakeholders.
- **Implementation of co-teaching programs**
 - Administrators shared suggestion on master schedule creation including departmentalization to solve scheduling issues and reduce IEP meetings.
- **Evaluation of co-teaching programs**
 - An informal or formal evaluation of programs allows for improvements to be made to program implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to achieve a better understanding of what administrators need to create successful co-teaching programs, particularly to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the LRE. School administrators directly oversee, lead, and implement all aspects of inclusion and the co-teaching process on a school site. For this reason, their input is hugely important to improve the implementation of co-teaching programs.

The question that this research sought to answer is: How can administrator perspectives regarding co-teaching facilitate the creation of successful co-teaching programs, particularly to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment?



Co-Teaching Implementation Cycle

Methodology

- Qualitative case study conducted with four secondary school administrators from one school district that have co-teaching programs at their school site.
- Data were collected through one focus group session. One participant submitted answers to the interview questions electronically. Participants were asked ten semi-structured interview questions that were developed to fill in gaps found in the literature. Participants were asked to share their co-teaching experience, explain how they implemented and evaluated their programs, and how they schedule for co-teaching.
- Data were analyzed using inductive analysis to help identify themes in the participants responses.

Implications

The results of this study give valuable insights to administrators and districts trying to implement co-teaching programs. The perspectives given by secondary school administrators may help to improve the overall success of co-teaching programs.

This study's findings lay the foundation for implementing co-teaching programs, starting with pre-implementation then moving into program implementation, and finally program evaluation.

The data from this study indicate that the evaluation and then implementation of co-teaching programs should be an ongoing cycle.